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Yunus urges South Asian leaders to introduce SAARC passport

KARACHI (Pakistan), Mar 6: Grameen Bank chief Nobel Laureate Professor Mohammad Yunus today (Tuesday) urged the countries of this region to introduce SAARC passport to facilitate easy movement of people across the borders, reports UNR said this would enhance cultural and other relations among people of the SAARC nations which could immensely help poverty alleviation efforts as well.

"If people are allowed to move freely, they can share each others' experience and unlock their potentials to remove poverty," he said during a n interactive session organised by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) at its headquarters' auditorium.

"I believe, people will feel proud having SAARC passports as citizens of the South Asian region," he added.

State Bank Acting Governor Mansurur Rahman Khan presided over the session, attended by top executives of different private and public commercial banks, micro-finance institutions and senior government officials.

The Nobel Laureate suggested for announcing a SAARC Day and celebrating it annually through cultural festivals across the region.

He also reiterated his call to introduce SAARC scholarships for students of the region, which, he believes, would help understand each others' problems and address those through collective efforts.

The audience listened to Prof. Yunus with great interest about his early experience in establishing the Grameen Bank and its success in alleviating poverty in rural areas in Bangladesh.

They sought advice and technical help from the Nobel Laureate

in addressing the problems that the micro-finance institutions in Pakistan have been facing.

Prof. Yunus suggested the Pakistani bankers to promote micro-finance movement and prioritise their focus on women so that they can have easy access to micro-credit.